

PRACTICAL USE OF THE OFFICE LABORATORY AND X-RAY—Including the Electrocardiograph—Paul Williamson, M.D. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1957. 323 pages, \$10.75.

This manual attempts to encompass laboratory, ECG and radiologic procedures for the office. As a laboratory guide to the clinician, the work may have merit, but for the technician, a constant compromise between limitations of the small laboratory and the need for up-to-date methods is evident.

After rather extensive discussions of technique in hematology, bacteriology, chemistry, some parasitology, mycology, and immunology, the author states, "I would recommend that the physician train his own technician, since school-trained technicians are experts in advanced techniques." With the decreasing exposure of physicians to the laboratory in present graduate training, one might well question the ability of most physicians, young or old, to train a "technician," even for the "office laboratory." The techniques a student can pick up from a well-trained technologist make it preferable to send the former to a good medical laboratory for a more satisfactory introduction.

Although a discussion of errors in technique is given for the procedures presented, some precautions should be added, such as use of disposable lancets for obtaining blood (to reduce serum hepatitis), and care in injecting BSP dye, since leakage around the vein can be very distressing. No mention is made of test tapes or sticks although these have largely replaced Benedict's solution as a qualitative test, and are time-saving for the small laboratory. Other tablet or stick tests for urinalysis are also omitted. The entire technical discussion of chemical tests is omitted with the explanation that instructions are given in the manual accompanying a photocolormeter.

A section on Electrocardiography discusses some of the indications for use of the ECG, points of interpretation, and possible errors. In the diagnosis of "The Coronary Attack" the use of the transaminase determination is omitted. Regarding the difficult cardiac case the author properly concludes "... it is probably best to refer the ECG and the patient to a cardiologist for diagnosis and recommendations."

The radiology section outlines the diagnosis and to a certain extent the differential diagnosis of certain normal and abnormal findings, in many instances with line drawings. The author displays great faith in the x-ray diagnosis of certain conditions, such as emphysema. Concerning this he states, "Errors in (x-ray) diagnosis are rare."

Similarly, concerning cardiac radiology he writes, "It is of course easy to tell both clinically and by x-ray what chambers of the heart are enlarged." The correct diagnosis of enlargements of the ventricle, especially the right ventricle, are often quite difficult to determine. In connection with the diagnosis of intra-atrial septal defects (the author doubtless means inter-atrial) he writes, "Errors are practically unheard of in diagnosing this condition. Diagnosis is simple and apparent in most cases, both clinically and roentgenologically. This is not true when very young babies are studied by x-ray, but it holds for adults." This is indeed the height of optimism.

The instructions for barium enema preparations are as follows: "The patient should eat lightly the day before examination and not take a laxative. In the evening before retiring he should take a plain water enema and upon rising the next morning take at least four plain water enemas. If the return from the fourth enema is not clear, he should take still another." This will tax the elderly and yield poorer results than oleum ricini. For the diagnosis of simple colitis, the author apparently relies on finding a portion of the colon that shows spasm and loss of normal markings. The author

then saves the day by noting that an irritable colon must be diagnosed clinically, not roentgenologically.

The technique and interpretation of hysterosalpingography and other contrast media procedures are outlined, but nowhere is there mention of the hazards to the physician or his patient from excessive amounts of diagnostic radiation.

For the office laboratory "technician," introduction to technique by a well-trained technologist would seem more satisfactory than the use of a text which, by the author's admission, is "a beginning—and nothing more." And for the busy clinician, the help and advice of a laboratory consultant, electrocardiologist or radiologist in setting up whatever procedures are considered desirable, will in most cases be a saving of time and money.

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ROENTGEN DIAGNOSIS OF ABDOMINAL TUMORS IN CHILDHOOD—Charles M. Nice, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., Alexander R. Margulis, M.D., and Leo G. Rigler, M.D., Department of Radiology, University of Minnesota Medical School. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1957. 75 pages, \$4.00.

This monograph is divided into eight sections, the major ones dealing with anatomic and embryologic factors, and a series of roentgen considerations. Masses in the region of the liver and other intraperitoneal sites are first considered. Then renal and adrenal masses. Then various other extraperitoneal masses are described in a series of four chapters.

The roentgen diagnosis of certain of these tumors is well outlined. However, the method of presentation might be a little more systematic, and in the next edition it would be worthwhile adding material on differential diagnosis. The importance of gonadal protection in the examination of infants and children does not receive the emphasis which it should. The work will be of value to medical students, especially those in pediatrics. The authors are on the staff of the University of Minnesota Department of Radiology, and all very competent in their field.

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DYNAMIC PSYCHIATRY IN SIMPLE TERMS—Robert R. Mexter, M.D., Senior Staff Psychiatrist, Community Clinic, Massachusetts Mental Health Center and Harvard Medical School. Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 44 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y., 1956. 174 pages, \$2.50.

The growing interest in the application of psychologic knowledge in general medical practice suggests a very real need for a book such as this one.

In general, it is felt that this book very well fulfills this need. Here is presented briefly but clearly a concept of personality development which is followed by descriptions of the various psychiatric disorders in the light of this theory. The valuable material on meeting the psychiatric patient, as well as a concluding chapter on "The Normal Life," add to the value of the book.

Unquestionably, there are psychiatrists who would differ with individual parts of the book. In the main, however, the outline of development, the classification of illnesses and recommendations for care of the patient are those that are in common use today. Perhaps most importantly, the suggestions for dealing with various symptom combinations and illnesses are made most clear. It is in this area that the individual practitioner will find the book of value. It is important, however, to remember that treatment in psychiatric conditions depends as much on good knowledge of personality structure and psychopathology, as general medicine does on physiology and general pathology. This book does a real service by bringing all of these factors together in an organized and clear fashion.

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